The Ultimate Guide to Email Accessibility

The tools, tips, and resources you need to send email campaigns for everyone

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Introduction

The world is growing, changing, and aging, and the world's email subscribers are coming along for the ride. As of October 2024, 5.52 billion individuals around the world used the internet—that's 2.75 billion more than in October 2014. In comparison, there were 4.37 billion email users in 2023. That's around 4/5th's of all internet users!

But what does all of this change mean for email marketers?

Apart from rethinking strategy and tactics, it points to the need for marketers to create more accessible email campaigns that can be used by anyone—regardless of their ability. This guide is a deep dive into what accessibility means for email professionals, with tips and best practices for writing, designing, and developing more inclusive email programs.

Creating accessible email is easy with Litmus

Accessibility checks in Litmus make it easy to test your email against accessibility best practices, identify areas for improvement, and make your emails more accessible to all of your subscribers.

Learn more about accessibility testing →

Key takeaways

Accessibility is more than adding alt text to images and checking your color contrast. It's about improving the experience for everyone.

It's not difficult to create more accessible email campaigns, but it does require making a few changes. Using a few simple guidelines, you can start sending more accessible email campaigns in no time.

1. Creating accessible emails allows you to reach a wider audience than ever.

There are currently over 4 billion email users worldwide, and none of those users are the same. Everyone has different abilities and disabilities—both permanent and temporary—and access to technology that informs how they experience email.

The best way to reach those users is by creating accessible emails that work across all skill levels, abilities, devices, and cultures. Learn why accessibility matters—and the business impact it has—on page 5.

2. Writing and visual design are key components of an accessible email campaign.

You don't have to be a coding expert to create more accessible emails. By writing and designing simpler, more subscriber-friendly emails, you can open up your content to a wider audience—and add more value while you're at it. Best practices for writing and designing more inclusive emails is on page 14.

3. **Any email template can be made more accessible with a handful of coding techniques.**

Developing an accessible email doesn't require fancy coding techniques. You can create email campaigns that can be accessed from a variety of devices and assistive technologies using simple, well-established principles and basic HTML. Learn how to make your code more accessible on **page 22.**

Why does accessibility matter?

Whether it's permanent blindness or a broken arm, the term "accessibility" encompasses it all. Varying levels of technology—and access to it— means not all email experiences are created equal for every person with a disability. Making your emails accessible means making them better for *everyone*.

Email is an important communication channel, and it continues to be one of the most widely used channels in the world. According to a study by Statistica, there will be 4.89 billion email users worldwide by the end of 2027. People are spending more time reading email, too. According to our own data, subscribers spend an average of 8.97 seconds reading each email.

In a world where ads are plentiful and attention spans are short, a person choosing to open an email and view the contents is incredibly valuable. In fact, our own research shows email's return on investment averages $36 for every dollar spent.

ROI by industry

50			
40			
30			
20	32:1	36:1	42.1	45:1
0			
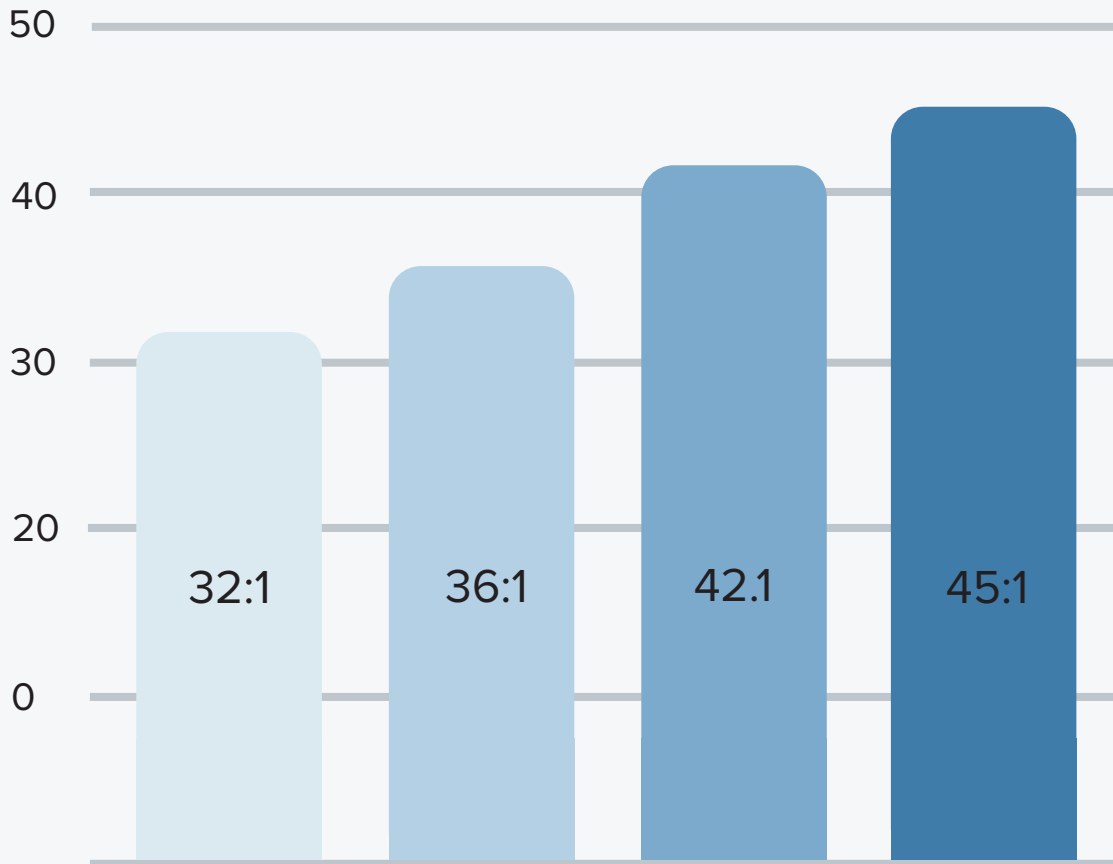
Media, publishing, events, sports, and entertainment

Software and technology

Marketing, PR, and advertising agency

Retail, ecommerce, and consumer goods or services

Disabilities impact a large share of the world's population —and email users

1 in 4 adults in the [United States](#) and [European Union](#) have a disability. According to the [WHO](#), that extends to 1 in 6 adults worldwide. What's less discussed is how these disabilities affect a person accessing and engaging with technology, including a typical email campaign.

According to IDEA, there are [13 categories of disabilities](#), but there is no exact count on the number of disabilities within those categories. Here are some stats on just a few:

- **[The World Health Organization](#)** estimates there are around 2.2 billion people with a near or distance vision impairment.

- **[Color blindness](#)** affects approximately every 1 in 12 men (8%) and 1 in 200 women (0.5%).

- An estimated **[15% of people have dyslexia](#)**. That means over 30 million adults in the United States and about 6 million adults in the United Kingdom have trouble reading.

- **[Cognitive disabilities affect 13.9% of adults](#)** in the United States.

- **[The world's population is aging](#)**, with the older population—that's people aged 60 or over—growing faster than all younger age groups. The number of older persons is projected to be 1.4 billion in 2030.

- **Situational disabilities**—like a broken arm or occupied hands—also contribute to people's ability to use email.

Now imagine if your email campaigns are not optimized for people with these disabilities… You're losing out on all of those engagements, and likely a customer.

ac·ces·si·bil·i·ty

/əkˌsesəˈbilədē/

The easiest way to define accessibility is the quality of being easily used or understood. In the context of email, we define accessibility as:

When an email's content is available to—and its functionality can be operated by—anyone, regardless of ability.

But it's not just about the abilities of the human body. A large portion of the world has limited access to data connections and the latest devices, creating additional challenges. Even in affluent countries, slow data connections and older devices can cause poor experiences for people that rely on the internet and email.

Accessibility is how we address all of these changes.

Laws and legislation

Multiple governments and legistlative acts have defined and redefined accessibility over the years. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (or ADA) helped create more accessible public and private facilities in the United States. In the UK, the Equality Act of 2010 laid similar groundwork. The most recent law is the European Accessibility Act (EAA). It's focused on making products and services more accessible for people with disabilites.

As technology has taken over the world, guidelines like Section 508 and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) have been adopted to ensure that accessibility practices are implemented on the web, too. For a lot of industries—like healthcare, higher education, government, and finance—adhering to these laws and guidelines is critical.

Reaching more people helps drive business results

But email strategy, design, and development shouldn't be driven solely by laws. By building accessibility into our emails, we open our campaigns up to a large population of subscribers who wouldn't otherwise be able to access them. Beyond being a good, ethical thing to do, building accessible emails can help drive business success.

The ROD Group estimates that the world's disabled population controls over [$1 trillion in annual disposable income](#). If you don't optimize your campaigns to make your emails accessible to everyone, you're leaving money on the table with every send.

It's also no longer acceptable to build inaccessible email campaigns. We have the tools, resources, and technology to make emails available to all people. And, for those lucky enough to be only temporarily disabled, a focus on accessibility can improve the user experience, as well.

The current state of email accessibility

When it comes to email accessibility, there's a disconnect between intention and action. 77% of brands say accessibility is a priority—but only 8% rigidly follow accessibility best practices. There's a misconception that optimizing your emails for accessibility is hard. The truth is, small changes can make a big impact in making your emails accessible.

Whether their motivation is ethical, legal, or financial, the majority of brands understand the importance of email accessibility. 77% of brands say that making their emails more accessible is a priority; 46% even claim it's a high priority for their team.

But while the vast majority of brands claim that email accessibility is a priority, many struggle putting accessibility best practices into action. Only 8% say they follow best practices for email accessibility in all of their campaigns. 30% say they don't optimize for accessibility yet.

> **"** *It's worth recognizing that accessibility probably isn't demonstrating sizable ROIs because brands have already alienated those audiences that appreciate accessibility the most. Accessibility is an investment in your ability to retain future subscribers at a higher rate."*
>
> **- Chad S. White** Oracle Digital Experience Agency

The numbers show a disconnect between intention and action when it comes to email accessibility. Getting started with making your emails more accessible can feel like an impossible task, and many marketers aren't sure where to start.

With the right tools, you can easily identify areas for improvement in your emails. Then start making small changes that will likely have a big impact on how your emails are received. This report gives you the tools, tips, and advice you need (so keep reading!).

Test your email accessibility today

Accessibility checks in Litmus make it easy to test your email against accessibility best practices, identify areas for improvement, and make your emails more accessible to all of your subscribers.

Start your free trial →

What are assistive technologies?

Assistive technologies enable disabled people to use different devices, the internet, and email—allowing them to experience a fuller, richer life. More recently, assistive technologies have jumped into the mainstream with the help of voice assistant-enabled devices.

Everyone needs help with something. For a lot of us, that help comes in the form of assistive technologies or technology designed to improve the functional capabilities of a person. A common example is eyeglasses. While some use glasses as fashion accessories, billions of people around the world rely on glasses to live better lives.

Online, assistive technologies come in a few varieties. One of the most common and important assistive technologies is the screen reader. Screen reader software translates the interface and content seen on screen into audio, allowing low-vision and blind users to use modern devices.

Common screen readers

There are a variety of first- and third-party screen reader applications in use today. Most operating systems have screen reader software built-in, but a large number of people rely on additional tools to access content online and via email.

Screen readers are an extremely useful assistive technology and are increasingly important for email developers to understand.

Some of the more popular screen readers include:

JAWS from Freedom Scientific

NVDA from NV Access

Window-Eyes from GW Micro, Inc.

VoiceOver on Apple devices

Narrator on Windows devices

TalkBack on Android devices

ChromeVox on Chrome laptops

For low-vision users, zoom settings are often used to increase the size of text and other visual elements on a screen. Likewise, dark and high contrast modes in many operating systems are enabled to improve the contrast and clarity of content.

Some low-vision users also employ hardware screen enlargers that help magnify content on screen without the use of software. For users with limited mobility and other physical disabilities, pointing devices are used to enable better interactions with computers and mobile devices.

Screen reader software isn't exclusive to people with disabilities. The growing popularity of voice assistant software—like Amazon Alexa, Apple's Siri, and Google Assistant— mean that assistive technologies have effectively gone mainstream.

More people than ever are using voice assistants to get news, do their shopping, and even check and reply to their emails. According to eMarketer, the smart speaker user base will hit 119.2 million in 2027. By creating more accessible emails, we empower subscribers to interact with our content how they want and need, creating trust in your brand.

What do your emails sound like?

Hear what your emails sound like to subscribers using screen readers. Try the latest accessibility tools in Litmus today.

Start your free trial →

Creating more accessible email

There are a number of ways to create more accessible email campaigns including copy, design, and the code behind every email. In this section, we'll look at the best ways to create better email experiences for everyone.

There's a lot that goes into the typical email marketing campaign. From content planning to copywriting, mockups to markup, and approvals to final send, all of these touchpoints create opportunities for making more accessible emails.

It's not only the code behind emails that affects accessibility—although that is important. A lot of the time, revisiting copy and the visual design of an email can greatly improve the experience for subscribers. Cognitive abilities, the average attention span, and physical disabilities all work together to inform the kinds of decisions we need to make when crafting our emails.

It's not only the email design that affects accessibility—although that is very important. A lot of the time, revisiting the copy and code behind the email can greatly improve the experience for subscribers. Cognitive abilities, the average attention span, and physical disabilities all work together to inform the kinds of decisions we need to make when crafting our emails.

Let's take a look at each part of the typical email campaign to understand how all three combine to help improve the experience for our subscribers.

Copywriting: Write copy everyone can understand

One of the simplest ways to improve the accessibility of your campaign is to revisit its copy. Ensuring your copy is easy to read and understand goes a long way in making your campaigns more accessible—and a few easy tricks can help make it happen.

Keep your copy concise

Although it's tempting to cram as much copy and content in an email as possible, there are a number of reasons why shorter, more concise copy is desirable

Many people suffer from cognitive disabilities that make reading difficult, especially with longer texts. Everything from traumatic brain injuries and dementia to dyslexia and ADHD can affect a person's ability to read. The W3 Working Group, which governs the WCAG guidelines, says that reading difficulties exist in all walks of life and levels of education.

For most people around the world, attention spans are short. According to psychologist Gloria Mark, the average attention span is 47 seconds. Let's assume you can read 230 words per minute—this gives you roughly 180 words to capture your reader's attention before they leave. It's best to get your point across quickly using shorter sentences.

> " *There are people with disabilities, including reading disabilities, even among highly educated users with specialized knowledge of the subject matter. It may be possible to accommodate these users by making the text more readable.*"
>
> **- WGA Guidelines,** W3 Working Group

Use shorter sentences

Long, complex sentences can make your email copy difficult to follow. Short sentences are easier to understand because they allow your audience to focus on the content rather than unpacking complicated sentence structures. Whenever possible, split sentences longer than 20 words into two.

Limit your use of jargon and difficult words

What's true for sentences is true for individual words: shorter is better. Long, more complex words are harder to absorb, and your audience might not know what they mean. Even if they do, it requires more concentration from your readers.

Try to always replace complex words with simpler, shorter synonyms. When in doubt, do the "speak" test. Ask: is that how you would talk in a regular conversation with a friend? If not, simplify your sentence.

Readability testing made easy: *The Flesch Reading Ease test*

Readability tests are an easy tool to find out how easy it will be for someone to read your text. The Flesch Reading Ease test is the most popular one. It's based on the average length of sentences and words in your document and ranks copy on a scale from 0 to 100. The higher the number, the easier it is to read your email copy. A score of 60-70 is considered plain English that's easily understood by 13- to 15-year-old students. That's the score you should aim for with most marketing copy.

Hemingway App's free tool lets you test your readability score for free and shows where you can improve.

Plus, tools like Grammarly or Yoast SEO offer readability scoring too.

Localize your content for global audiences

For marketers targeting global audiences, focus on translating your copy into local languages instead of relying on operating systems or browser translation. There are coding techniques we'll look at that can help, but using a respected translation service that incorporates culturally appropriate language and content is a good idea.

Design: Designing with accessibility in mind

Once you have your content written, it's time to design your email. Visual design is more than mere decoration, it's an important tool for creating accessible emails. Here are the best ways to ensure your campaigns are designed with everyone in mind, regardless of ability.

Use real text

Some companies still use all-image emails, designing them in programs like Photoshop, and dumping them into a basic HTML template. If this is you, stop! Yes, this technique lets you design your emails just right, but using real text in HTML has so many more benefits when it comes to accessibility.

Many email clients disable images for security reasons, or if you have an unstable internet connection. When this happens, no one can read your emails. Perhaps more importantly, even when images are enabled, assistive technologies can't take full advantage of your content. Screen readers can only access the underlying code of an email, not the text in an image, and screen enlargers and zoom settings often result in blurry, unreadable images.

The majority of your copy should be included in your email as live text inside of HTML elements. In the coding section, we'll look at how to properly do that, as well as how to make images more accessible.

❌ **Image-based email**
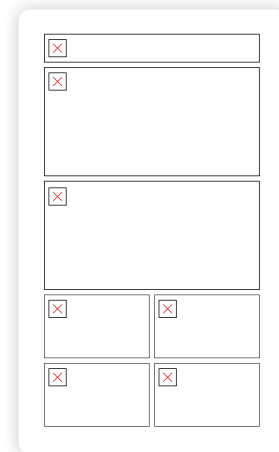

✅ **Text-based email**
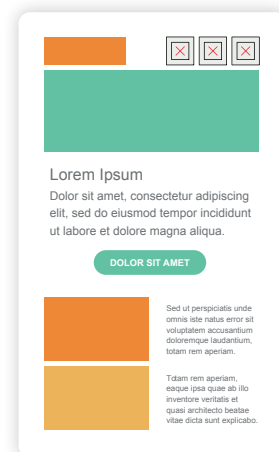
Create a strong hierarchy

Both cognitive and situational disabilities (like being in a hurry or being distracted) make it hard for people to read and understand long, uniform blocks of text. Hierarchy—or creating visual differences that reinforce importance—helps those users quickly consume content in email.

By using text size, color, and placement, you can create emails that are easily scanned and read. Try creating bold, high-contrast headlines above smaller portions of copy, and allow for enough whitespace between sections to avoid content bleeding together.

✅ **Strong visual hierarchy**
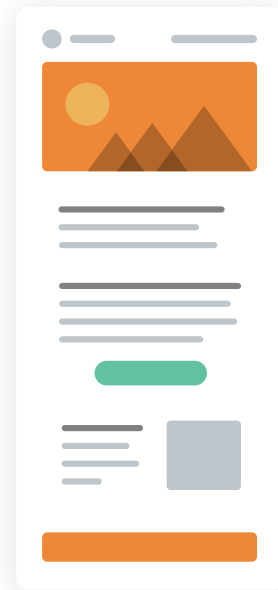
Left-justify your email copy

Using both real text and hierarchy can aid readability, but there are subtler ways to improve the readability of your emails, too. One way is by using left-justified text for longer sections of copy.

Reading relies on visual cues to make sense of where we are on a page or screen. One of the most important cues is the start of a new line, which acts as an anchor for our eyes when jumping around an email. It's helpful to keep that anchor in the same place for every new line in longer bits of copy, but many designers prefer the visual symmetry provided by centered text. Using left-justified text is one of the best ways to keep copy readable.

❌ **Long sections of center-justified text**
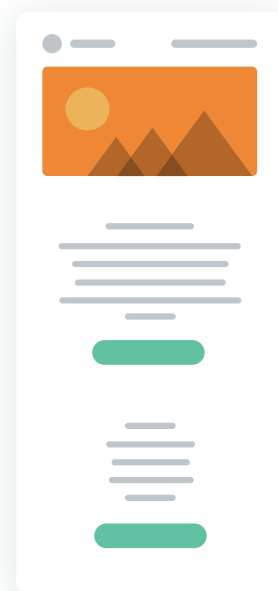
Justified text, which adjusts the spacing between words to keep uniform lines of text, creates those anchors for our eyes, but it also creates problems. When using fully justified text, rivers of white are often introduced, which create hurdles for people with cognitive disabilities.


❌ **Fully justified text**

## *Left-justify your email copy*

Email text should be large enough for people to easily read, regardless of what size screen they use. Some mobile devices, like iPhones, will automatically enlarge text that is less than 14px in size. Making your copy at least that big—preferably even larger—can help create better reading experiences.
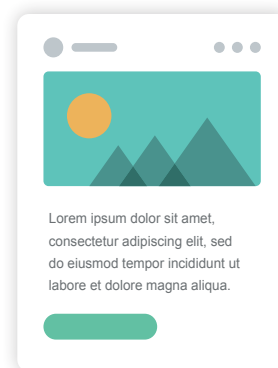
Optimize your line spacing

Creating enough space between lines of text is a great way to improve readability. When lines of copy are too close together, it's hard to tell them apart. On the other hand, when they are too far apart, it's no longer intuitive for our eyes to jump to the next line. The World Wide Web Consortium has clear guidelines around proper line spacing, suggesting 1.5 to 2 is preferred to single spacing.
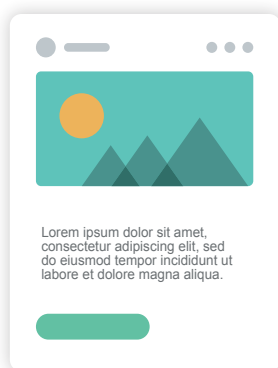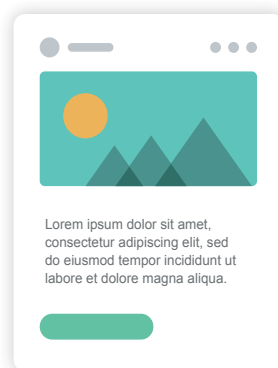
❌ **Too close**   ✅ **Just right**   ❌ **Too far apart**

Keep contrast high

Contrast is the difference between two elements in an email. Most often, it's the difference between the color of copy and the background on which it sits. Too low of contrast means people with low-vision can have a very hard time reading an email, seeing a button, etc.

Fortunately, there are well-established guidelines for proper contrast. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines clearly define how they determine appropriate contrast. The main rule is to make elements distinguishable.

> 66 *Make it easier for users to see and hear content including separating foreground from background."*

There are a variety of ways to do this, including using color, font weight, and font size. Regardless of which method you use, make sure your elements contrast enough with other elements to ensure your emails are accessible.

Accessibility group WebAIM even has a free contrast checker online that can help identify any contrast issues before your subscribers do.

Increase usability

When it comes to actually interacting with emails, make sure all clickable items (links, buttons, polls, etc.) are usable for everyone.

Link text should be distinguishable from the surrounding text. There is a reason the default for a link is underlined blue text. When overriding that styling, you should do so sparingly. Underlines, especially, are helpful for denoting links in an email because there are approximately 300 million colorblind people in the world that might not pick up on only a different color of text.

Call-to-action (CTA) links and buttons must be large enough to be tapped by the shakiest hands or pointing devices. And always add ample whitespace around those targets to prevent accidental link taps and frustration for users.

Include a hover state for **CTA links and buttons** to create a better, more accessible user experience. Targeting links in your CSS and using the :hover pseudo selector allows you to apply different properties when a user hovers over those links. This can provide a clear indicator that a piece of content can be clicked and is an often overlooked enhancement in email design.

> *Folks opening and reading your emails want to engage with your content! Making that experience somewhat predictable and expected makes for a better experience. You can wow them in so many amazing ways — make sure it's not, 'Wow, this email is a total pain to navigate.' Allow them to click on your links intentionally. Make it easy for them to do so. Reduce frustrations. Reduce overwhelm."*
>
> **- Sarah Gallardo,** Oracle Digital Experience Agency

Keep your email layout simple

The layout of your email itself can affect accessibility.

Complex, multi-column layouts can lead to sensory overload for users. The more complex a layout, the more difficult it is for a user to follow, so simpler layouts are recommended. Single column layouts are especially effective at creating accessible campaigns—they streamline content and help reinforc hierarchy, aiding scannability in the process.
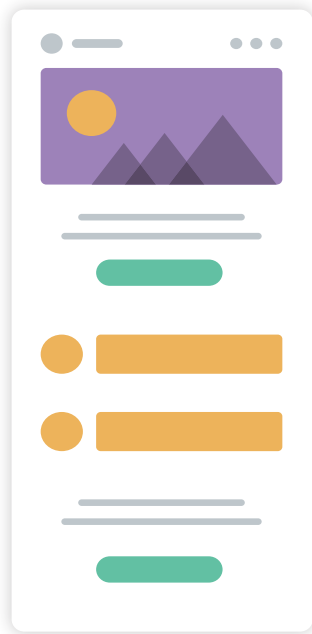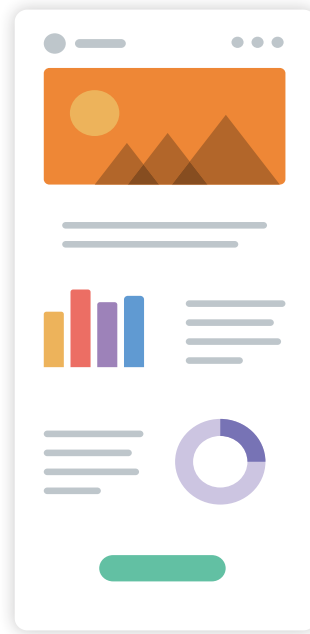
✓ Single column layout   ✗ Multi-column layout

Single column layouts are also generally easier to adjust across different screen sizes. With over [66% of the world online](#) (and growing rapidly), more people are using small mobile devices to access the internet and email. Regardless of which technique you're using, keeping your emails responsive across different devices is a great way to improve the email experience.

Test your emails in 100+ email clients

See how your email works across mulitple desktop, web, and mobile apps and devices with Litmus.

Start your free trial →

Code: How to make your email code more accessible

While copywriting and visual design are important, improving the code behind your email campaigns is one of the most powerful ways to create more accessible emails, especially for subscribers relying on assistive technology like screen reader software.

Screen readers work by looking at the underlying code of an interface—or in our case, an email—and translating it into audio that reads the interface out to the user. Optimizing our code is the best way to make sure what is read out loud is actually usable.

Use accessible tables

Most email templates are built using HTML tables. HTML tables are still the most

reliable way to structure emails and have them display properly across the 100+ email clients in popular use. However, HTML tables are actually meant to be used for tabular data, not layouts.

The default for most screen readers is to read each individual table, table row, and table cell out loud to the user. For emails that often rely on multiple nested tables, this means that subscribers have to wade through a lot of markup garbage to get to the actual content. We can easily disable this behavior by including an attribute on each table in our email's HTML

```
<table role="presentation" border="0" cellpadding="0" cellspacing="0"></table>
```

By including the role attribute with the value "presentation," we effectively remove the table from the screen reader's model and prevent it from being read aloud. The screen reader then skips to the content within, allowing the subscriber to focus on the content instead of manually skipping through useless layout markup.

It should be noted that there are other ARIA roles that could be used instead of presentation. Presentation is set to be deprecated in future versions of the ARIA spec, with the "none" role replacing it. However, support for none is currently limited, so it's up to you to decide which role works for your specific audience.

If you're using tables to create bulletproof buttons, you may want to include the button role to provide additional context for users that need it. Just like with alternative text on images, though, you shouldn't leave roles off of tables, as that will result in screen readers reading each individual table, table row, and table cell to the user.

View your emails differently

Use Litmus' visual impairment filters to check what your email looks like in four color vision deficiencies.

Start your free trial →

Use semantic HTML

Just like the table element means something specific to a screen reader, other HTML elements provide additional context around content. This context, or semantic meaning, helps users navigate and consume content more easily.

When coding your emails, you should strive to use proper semantic structure in your HTML document by utilizing HTML elements for their intended purpose.

For example, take a typical product announcement email. It contains a headline, product image, description of a product, customer quote, and call-to-action. Although it's tempting to mark all of that up using table cells, divs, or spans, there are better HTML elements to use.

- **Headlines should use heading elements**, which include h1, h2, h3, h4, h5, and h6 in HTML. The h1 element is reserved for the most important headline or title of a document, with each subsequent heading decreasing in importance.

- **Product descriptions and other copy**, should be marked up using either a "p" (paragraph) tag or a span. Multiple lines call for a paragraph, whereas standalone lines are usually spans of text.

- **Customer quotes** use the blockquote element to provide additional context. Additionally, you can use the cite element to denote the source of the quote.

- **The button element**, while semantically useful, isn't well-supported across email clients. Therefore, using an anchor tag (a) is preferred for CTAs that are styled like buttons.

Mozilla currently lists [145 HTML elements](). That means there's all kinds of semantic value we can add to our campaigns to make them more accessible for subscribers.

Always include alternative (alt) text for images

Earlier, we discussed how all-image emails create problems for users. Still, images are often required in email campaigns. How can we ensure that images in our emails are still accessible?

The best way is to include alternative text—or alt text—with your images. Alt text is the textual equivalent for your images that describes them to subscribers who use assistive technology or have images turned off. It provides critical missing context for users who would otherwise be left in the dark.

Alternative text is easy to include. All that's needed is the addition of the alt attribute to the img tag in your HTML.

```
<img alt="Save up to 50 percent during the summer sales event."
src="example.jpg" width="600" border="0">
```

When a screen reader encounters that image, it will read the alt text out loud. As a bonus, when images are disabled in most email clients, that alt text will still be displayed. You can even add inline CSS to the image to style alt text.

```
<img alt="Save up to 50 percent during the summer sales event."
src="example.jpg" width="600" border="0" style="color: #006fee; font-family:
sans-serif; font-size: 32px; font-weight: bold; line-height: 48px;">
```

Images are used for multiple things in email. However, not all images require the same type of alt text. Generally speaking, images can be categorized as informative, active, or decorative.

- **Informative images** provide additional information to subscribers that is in addition to any other copy surrounding them.

- **Active images** prompt a subscriber to take some action—they are additional calls-to-action in an email.

- **Decorative images** are there solely for visual design and don't impart any additional information to subscribers.

Create emails that everyone can experience

Maximize your email's impact by designing accessible content for all. Accessibility checks are always at your fingertips with Litmus.

Start your free trial →

While it can be tempting to apply descriptive alt text to each type, that can actively work against the goal of making an email accessible. For example, providing descriptions for decorative images adds unnecessary information to the document when read aloud by screen readers, resulting in frustration and, potentially, confusion for subscribers. The following guidelines will help you keep your images and emails more accessible and usable.

1. Alt text for informative images should describe the information in that image and repeat the text in the image if there is any. Avoid repeating information if the surrounding copy states the same thing as the image.

2. Alt text for active images should describe the result of the intended action. Think of them like buttons or text links.

3. Include an empty alt attribute (e.g. alt="") for decorative images. Failing to do so will result in most screen readers reading the entire image source URL, creating a confusing and frustrating experience for users.

4. Avoid calling attention to the fact that it is an image. Don't use language like, "This is a picture of…" or "Here's an image of…" This doesn't add any value to the subscriber and only serves as a reminder that they can't see your images.

5. Don't use alt text as a prompt for users to download or enable images, as not all users will have this ability or benefit from it.

6. When in doubt, read your alternative text out loud along with the rest of the surrounding content.
    If it sounds natural to you and provides the intended value, it's good alt text.

Specify a language attribute

As email marketers continue to send to a global audience, it's important to look at one final coding technique to create more accessible emails: the HTML language attribute.

The language—or lang—attribute specifies what language a piece of content is. It is usually set at a global level on the HTML tag:

```
<html lang="en">
```

However, it can also be applied directly to other elements. This is helpful when mixing different languages in a single email. For example, while the global language of an email is set to English (en), the email could include a message for Spanish speakers. In this case, the lang attribute can be set on the paragraph of Spanish, like so:

```
<p lang="es">¿Hablas español? ¡Nosotros también!</p>
```

In both cases, the language attribute has one major benefit: it tells any assistive technology which language profile to use for content. When a screen reader encounters the language attribute, it will switch the language profile to match, which results in the use of correct pronunciation and accents, allowing for a much better overall experience for subscribers. You wouldn't want your email written in French to be pronounced in American English, would you?

It's important to note that the language attribute doesn't translate content for you. You can't wrap English in a French language tag and expect a screen reader to start speaking French. If you need to translate and localize content in an email, you need to do that as part of your content development process. However, once translated, the lang attribute ensures that the localized content sounds natural to native speakers.

Build on an accessible foundation

Want to build accessible emails but don't know where to start? Use our pre-built, heavily-tested starter templates to build beautiful emails for everyone.

Find the perfect template →

Getting buy-in for accessibility

While markers should want to make emails accessible because it's the right thing to do, many stakeholders won't be swayed by good intentions. Making the business case for accessibility—and showing a process for implementing accessibility best practices—can be the best way to get stakeholders and teammates onboard.

As we've seen in earlier sections, email is an extremely valuable channel. Email marketers average a return on investment of 36:1, far higher than other marketing channels. And more people than ever are spending significant amounts of time in email, including a disabled population that controls over $21 billion in annual disposable income.

Ignoring accessibility not only creates frustrating user experiences, but excludes you from creating long-lasting and valuable relationships with an important population of people. And, when you include voice assistant users, you're leaving even more money on the table.

Why you should embrace accessibility

When it comes down to it, there are clear reasons every business should start building accessible email campaigns:

1. Email is ranked as one of the most valuable marketing channels.

2. The disabled population controls significant disposable income.

3. The number of non-disabled users interacting with emails via voice is growing.

4. Industries like healthcare, government, higher education, and finance are subject to accessibility legislation.

5. 77% of brands are making accessibility a priority. If you don't, you're falling behind.

It's no longer an option to ignore accessibility. If you do, you're effectively ignoring a huge user base and the business they control.

Steps for securing buy-in

Making the case for investing in accessibility can be difficult depending on your team structure and goals. Having a clear plan in place and knowing what resources you need to execute that plan are key to getting the buy-in needed to improve your emails for users. Here are our tips for getting your team onboard with accessibility in email.

1. **Present your case:** Use the stats and research in this book to provide evidence for why your team should focus on accessibility.

2. **Audit your emails:** Review your own email campaigns to identify opportunities for improvements.

3. **Plan out improvements:** Based on your audit, document which campaigns need improvements, who will make those changes, how long those updates will take, and how those updates will improve a user's experience. Make it clear that implementing these changes will not take significant bandwidth

4. **Gather your tools:** Figure out what tools you need to make those updates. For building and testing emails, Litmus Builder combined with the accessibility checks in Litmus will allow you to quickly create accessible emails and ensure they're working as intended. A variety of third-party tools and browser extensions are also available to help with the development process.

5. **Get additional resources:** Not everyone has the resources to improve accessibility on their own. Reach out directly to your ESP to see if they can help improve the accessibility of their email templates and tools. If needed, work with third-party accessibility consultants or email developers.

Keep in mind that accessibility is a spectrum, not a single solution. Although we should strive to implement as many techniques as possible to improve the accessibility of an email campaign, that can be unrealistic for a lot of teams.

Making even small improvements, like adding ARIA roles to tables or left-aligning text, can have massive benefits for users. You don't have to put every technique in this guide to work, but you should do as much as possible to create better emails for all of your current subscribers and your future subscribers.

Wrapping up

Between copywriting, design, and code, there's a lot that goes into creating accessible email campaigns. Without prior experience, that work can be daunting. When you look at the potential impact—both on a subscriber's experience and your company's bottom line—it's clear that this work is worth doing.

Test your email in 100+ email clients

See how your email works across multiple desktop, web, and mobile apps and devices with Litmus.

Start your free trial today →

And, with Litmus' accessibility tools in Litmus Test, ensuring accessibility has never been easier. Ge valuable insights into your email's structure, language settings, image accessibility, readability, and even hear how your email sounds to screen reader users.

Get started today with a free 7-day trial of Litmus and join over 700,000 email professionals who rely on Litmus to create, personalize, and test more accessible email campaigns.

This guide was written according to guidelines in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the European Accessibility Act (EAA). For complete compliance, refer to the official WCAG guidelines.

Who is Litmus?

Litmus helps email marketers send better emails. The Litmus platform works easily with your ESP to help you build faster, personalize better, and thoroughly test all of your marketing emails before they hit the inbox. (We make sure they land in the inbox, too.) Marketers love Litmus because they can consistently deliver a great brand experience to every subscriber.

We're passionate about software that makes creating high-performing email for all of your audiences easy—and getting the best results in return. To help with accessibility best practices, all plans include:

- 40+ accessibility checks that let you know if you missed any alt-text.

- Email hierarchy audits to make sure the content in your email is logical.

- Test to hear what your email sounds like for folks who use a screen reader.

- Visual impairment filters to check how your email looks in four color vision deficiencies.

As marketers, we know that email marketing is complex. That's why we're on a mission to help brands get access to the knowledge and tools they need to send better emails.

We offer information in many forms to help your team stay at the forefront of the industry:

- [Industry-leading blog](#)
- [Litmus Live conference](#)
- [YouTube videos](#)
- [Virtual and in-person events](#)
- [Weekly and monthly newsletters](#)

If you have any questions about email, whether they're related to accessibility or not, [send us a message on LinkedIn](#). We're all email geeks—talking even more about email would make our days!

Make your emails work for everyone with Litmus Accessibility Checks

Maximize the reach of every email with content that is accessible to all subscribers.

Align your brand with truly inclusive practices.

- Run a test to automatically check your email against **40+ accessibility best practices** without any extra steps.

- Get a full breakdown of accessibility issues, with guided advice on how to fix them before you send.

- Check HTML tags and text alignment required to create a great email experience for subscribers with visual or cognitive impairments.

- Leverage Visual Impairment Filters to further optimize for color vision deficiency.

Only with Litmus! Listen to how subscribers will hear your email.

- Preview an audio recording of how a screen reader will relay your email content.

- View a transcript of your audio file to pinpoint any areas that need adjustment.

- Check important HTML elements like table roles, content type, alt text, and language tags that affect how your email is transcribed.

- Review the heading hierarchy to ensure screen readers can efficiently navigate your email.

Accesibility checks are available in every Litmus plan. Start your free trial today!